

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4403

June 24, 2016

Grand County Council
125 E. Center St.
Moab, UT 84532

Dear Grand County Council:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding funding losses for the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project. This issue has been, and remains, one of my top priorities. Below is a timeline of recent actions I have taken to ensure funding remains steady.

On March 14, 2016, I sent a letter to the House Committee on Appropriations urging the Committee to disregard the President's Budget Request and fully fund the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup account.

On May 19, I received word that the Appropriations Committee was able to fully support my request by funding UMTRA at \$37,629,000, the same as FY2016 and an increase of \$2,845,000 above the President's request.

In addition, the Committee also included specific language in the report that specified the amount for Moab so that this amount is undeniably clear to the Department of Energy (DOE). Moab's specific mention in the report is a major victory, as it is usually rolled into the "Small Sites" funding account.

On April 25, after hearing of the DOE's plans to lay off workers, I sent a letter to Secretary Moniz requesting further information and justification for the Department's actions. After multiple staff level communications, senior DOE officials came to my office to answer for the workforce reductions. While we did not come to a consensus, the DOE committed to work with me and offered to visit the site.

On May 26, I voted in favor of the Appropriations bill containing the funding for the UMTRA Project, which ultimately failed to pass the House of Representatives. As a result, this bill will be bundled in a end-of-year omnibus package.

I assure you I will continue to fight for the UMTRA project and ensure any end-of-year spending package includes the vital language specific to Moab. Enclosed are copies of the aforementioned letters.

Sincerely,


Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4403

March 14, 2016

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

As you begin work on the fiscal year 2017 Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies bill, I urge you to disregard the President's Budget Request and fund the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup at the 2016 level or above.

Funding for the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup is essential because it supports the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project, which is in the process of removing Cold War era uranium tailings from the banks of the Colorado River near Moab, Utah. Removal of these tailings from the former national defense site will eliminate a massive hazard from the doorsteps of Moab residents and the 25 million other downstream water users in places Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

The President's FY2017 budget request is wholly inadequate. It proposes a 14% cut for the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup account and specifically calls for a 10% reduction at UMTRA while at the same time boosting the Washington, D.C. headquarters fund by \$5.7 million.

Congress must realign the Department of Energy's priorities and allocate resources in a way that supports responsible environmental stewardship, satisfies the federal government's responsibility to cleanup post Cold War era sites, and prioritizes water safety over headquarters operations in Washington, D.C.

I urge the Subcommittee to reject the President's budget request for the Non-defense Environmental Cleanup account and allocate funding that moves these projects forward in a positive way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Chaffetz", with a large, stylized initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4403

April 25, 2016

Secretary Ernest Moniz
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz,

I am writing in regards to the upcoming workforce reduction at the Department of Energy's Moab Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project. The Department's FY 2017 Budget Justification proposes a 14 percent cut for the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup account and specifically calls for a 10 percent reduction at the UMTRA Project. While projects in the field are suffering from budget cuts, Headquarters Operations in Washington, D.C. were increased nearly 80 percent in 2016, and the Department is requesting an additional 8 percent increase for 2017.

As you know, funding for the Non-Defense Environmental Cleanup is essential because it supports the UMTRA Project, which is in the process of removing Cold War era uranium tailings from the banks of the Colorado River near Moab, Utah. Removal of these tailings from the former national defense site will eliminate a massive hazard from the doorsteps of Moab residents and the 25 million downstream water users in places such as Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

Based on previous staff level meetings, I appreciate Department staff working to provide answers to my questions. I would urge the Department to realign its priorities by providing sufficient funding for the UMTRA Project and reverse its decision to reduce the workforce. The government must keep its commitment to cleanup post Cold War era sites, and prioritize water safety over headquarters operations in Washington, D.C.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress

JASON CHAFFETZ
3RD DISTRICT, UTAH

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON
THE JUDICIARY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4403

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May 6, 2016

Secretary Ernest Moniz
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz,

I am writing in regards to the workforce reductions at the Department of Energy's Moab Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project. Due to conflicting reports about layoffs and reduced shipments of hazardous materials, I request a briefing with Department staff in order to better understand the ongoing situation.

Recently, Utah's *Deseret News*¹ cited UMTRA Project Director, Don Metzler, as attributing capacity shortages at Crescent Junction and aging equipment as causes for the workforce reductions. However, in a staff level conference call, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Waste Management did not mention any of the factors outlined by Director Metzler and instead attributed the budget cuts to the weather.

In order to better understand this complex situation, I would like to meet with Department staff to be briefed on this issue. In addition, I look forward to discussing concerns raised in my April 25, 2016 letter regarding budget cuts in field operations while Washington Headquarters Operations were increased nearly 90 over the past two fiscal years.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Member of Congress

¹ O'Donoghue, Amy Joi. "Moab tailings removal slows, Chaffetz fights proposed funding cuts." *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah) 5 May 2016. Print